

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9541
INFO AMEMBASSY ASUNCION
AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
AMCONSUL SAO PAULO
US MISSION NATO BRUSSELS 253

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRASILIA 0262

EO 11652 GDS
TAGS PFOR MARR BR XN
SUBJECT: US AGAIN ALLEGED TO SOUTH ATLANTIC TREATY

REF: 76 BRASILIA 10101 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY. ARTICLE IN RECENT ISSUE OF "DEFENSE AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS " ALLEGING US SUPPORT FOR SOUTH ATLANTIC TREATY HAS EVOKED NEW ROUND OF EXPRESSIONS OF FOREIGN MINISTRY NON-INTEREST, FOLLOWED BY RENEWED EDITORIAL ATTACKS ON THAT POLICY BY ESTADO DE SAO PAULO, WHICH ARGUES THAT RIO TREATY NO LONGER VIABLE INSTRUMENT FOR COPING WITH THREATS TO HEMISPHERE. SINCE LATEST FLURRY IS ANOTHER INDICATION THAT SPECULATION ON INTENTIONS OF US IN SOUTH ATLANTIC WILL NOT GO AWAY SOON, EMBASSY REQUESTS DEPARTMENT'S GUIDANCE. END SUMMARY.

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2. EVER ATTENTIVE TO PRESUMED SOUTH ATLANTIC THREAT, MAJOR BRAZILIAN DAILIES HAVE GIVEN FRONT-PAGE COVERAGE TO ARTICLE BY BRITISH MILITARY WRITER LEIGH JOHNSON IN RECENT ISSUE OF MAGAZINE "DEFENSE AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS" WHICH CLAIMS THAT US IS PROMOTING CREATION OF SOUTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION. ESTADO DE SAO PAULO QUOTES JOHNSON ARTICLE AS STATING THAT "VARIOUS REPORTS INDICATE THAT WASHINGTON PROPOSES THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN INTEGRA-

TED NAVAL FORCE, WITH A UNIFIED STRATEGIC COMMAND, AIR POWER AND BASES IN THE SOUTHERN CONE. THERE ARE OTHER INDICATIONS THAT SOUTH AFRICA COULD BE INTERESTED IN SATO, BUT BRAZIL APPEARS TO HAVE BLOCKED THE IDEA FOR THE MOMENT, NOTING THAT IT IS MUCH MORE INTERESTED IN CLOSE RELATIONS WITH THE COUNTRIES OF BLACK AFRICA."

3. COMMENTING ON ARTICLE, UNIDENTIFIED FOREIGN MINISTRY "ANALYST" WAS SUBSEQUENTLY QUOTED AS STATING THAT BRAZIL IS NOT INTERESTED IN PARTICIPATING IN AN AGREEMENT WITH A RACIST REGIME SUCH AS SOUTH AFRICA, ADDING THAT THE "RIO PACT REMAINS A VALID INSTRUMENT FOR THE DEFENSE OF THE CONTINENT WHEN IT IS THREATENED."

THE ITAMARATY SOURCE ADDED THAT "IT WOULD BE CHILDISH TO BELIEVE THAT THE PENTAGON WOULD STAND BY WITH ITS ARMS FOLDED IF THE SOVIET FLEET PENETRATED BELLIGERENTLY INTO SOUTH ATLANTIC WATERS... THE AMERICANS WOULD TAKE A FIRM AND IMMEDIATE POSITION TO DEFEND THEMSELVES, DEFENDING STRATEGIC AREA THAT IS VITAL FOR THEM-- LATIN AMERICA. THE BLOCKADE OF CUBA IS PROOF OF THIS."

4. IN TWO SUCCESSIVE EDITORIALS, THE ESTADO DE SAO PAULO DREW ON THE JOHNSON ARTICLE TO REAFFIRM ITS FREQUENTLY VOICED SUPPORT FOR A SOUTH ATLANTIC TREATY AND TO SCORE ITAMARATY FOR ITS INDIFFERENCE TO SOUTH ATLANTIC SECURITY. ESTADO SAW THE JOHNSON ARTICLE AS A TRIAL BALLOON OF SOME SIGNIFICANCE WHEN VIEWED IN THE LIGHT OF UNCONFIRMED REPORTS FROM BRUSSELS THAT AN "OUTLINE" OF A SOUTH ATLANTIC TREATY HAS BEEN PREPARED AND IN LIGHT OF THE FACT THAT THE BRAZILIAN NAVY WILL PARTICIPATE IN THIS YEAR'S CARIBEX ALONG WITH SHIPS FROM THE CONFIDENTIAL

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US AND OTHER NATO COUNTRIES. URGING CREATION OF A SOUTH ATLANTIC TREATY WITH US PARTICIPATION, ESTADO ARGUES THAT THE RIO PACT IS NO LONGER A VIABLE DEFENSE ARRANGEMENT BECAUSE THE IMPENDING REHABILITATION OF CUBA IN THE INTER-AMERICAN SYSTEM AND THE GROWING SOVIET INFLUENCE IN PERU MAKE IT UNLIKELY THAT HEMISPHERIC SIGNATORIES WILL AVE THE UNITY OF PURPOSE TO COMBAT SOVIET EXPANSIONISM. THE EDITORIAL NOTES THAT "IF THE RIO PACT FAILED TO ISOLATE CUBA WITHIN THE HEMISPHERE, HOW CAN IT BE EXPECTED TO COMBAT CUBA AND HER SUPER-POWER MENTOR ON THE HIGH SEAS;" ESTADO'S SECOND EDITORIAL SCORES THE FOREIGN MINISTRY FOR ITS "BEATIFIC VISION OF PEACE" IN THE SOUTH ATLANTIC AND FOR THE SUGGESTION--BY THE ITAMARATY ANALYST-- THAT THE DEFENSE OF BRAZIL IS THE EXCLUSIVE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE US. THIS IDEA, THE EDITORIAL CHARGES, ACCEPTS LATIN AMERICA AS WITHIN THE "LEBENSRAUM" OF THE US. THE EDITORIAL CONCLUDES BY LAMENTING THAT BRAZIL' DIPLOMACY IS NOT THAT OF AN "EMERGING POWER" AWARE OF ITS RESPONSIBILITIES TO DEFEND THE NATION'S MOST BASIC INTERESTS.

5. COMMENT. THE EMBASSY HAS NOT SEEN THE JOHNSON ARTICLE AND WOULD APPRECIATE THE FULL TEXT. PREDICTABLY THE ARTICLE'S ALLEGATIONS OF US SUPPORT FOR SATO HAS STIMULATED SEVERAL REQUESTS FOR CONFIRMATION FROM PRESS CONTACTS HERE AND FROM OTHER MISSIONS. WE HAVE TRIED TO AVOID COMMENT BUT WHEN WE HAVE BEEN PRESSED, WE HAVE TAKEN THE LINE THAT THE UNITED STATES OF COURSE FOLLOWS THE SOUTH ATLANTIC SECURITY SITUATION CLOSELY, BUT THAT WE ARE NOT AWARE OF ANY US INTEREST IN A FORMALLY STRUCTURED DEFENSE ARRANGEMENT. SINCE IT IS NOW CLEAR THAT SPECULATION ABOUT US INTENTIONS IN THE SOUTH ATLANTIC WILL NOT ABATE SOON, THE EMBASSY WOULD WELCOME THE DEPARTMENT'S UP-TO-DATE AUTHORITATIVE GUIDANCE. WE WOULD HOPE GUIDANCE COULD INCLUDE SOME INDICATIONS OF 1) THE DEPARTMENT'S APPRECIATION OF THE SEVERITY OF THE CURRENT THREAT TO THE SOUTH ATLANTIC IN LIGHT OF THE PUTATIVE SOVIET NAVAL BUILD UP AND POLITICAL TURMOIL IN SOUTHERN AFRICA; 2) DEGREE OF US ENCOURAGEMENT, IF ANY, FOR SOUTH ATLANTIC TREATY AND PROSPECTS FOR US PARTICIPATION; 3) NATIO'S ROLE IN DEVELOPING ASSESSMENTS
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OF SOVIET THREAT IN SOUTH ATLANTIC AND PROSPECTIVE COUNTERMEASURES SUCH AS SUPPORT FOR A SOUTH ATLANTIC DEFENSE ARRANGEMENT.
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